

called it, was the ultimate example of total government control.

Now, of course, we are not the Soviet Union. I am not saying we are. But today we are engaged in the great debate of at least this century of health care. But it is a bigger issue than health care. The issue is about government control of our lives. Regardless of how you put the bill that is now over 2,000 pages, it changes the philosophy that the government now will control health care in this country, rather than us as citizens.

You know, the idea that government is going to save us all. We are going down that road of government, more government, more government, more government. You know, government is already the biggest employer in this country. It is the biggest consumer in this country. It is the biggest landowner in this country. It is the biggest spender in this country. It has most of the money. And when it runs out of money, it takes money from the people when they are alive and even when they are dead because of the death tax.

Just a few months ago, the government took control over the financial industry, the mortgage industry, the banking industry, and the automobile industry, just to name a few. But I don't believe the people in this country are broken, and they are not defeated. They showed it when they came to Washington, D.C., this week. They are concerned about government. It is a bigger issue than health care. They are concerned about government running roughshod over their lives. They exercised, even with all of the critics and cynics, they exercised their right to peacefully assemble and petition government for redress of grievances. It is in the First Amendment. It is first because the First Amendment is the most important.

But people are fearful of government, of government control over their lives. This health care bill is just one example of us moving down that road of government is going to take care of us all; it is going to save us all.

Mr. Speaker, this country has never been great and will never be great because we have government programs. Government programs have not made this country what it is today. Individuals have made it. But, also, the individuals that had the right and have the right of liberty, to make decisions on their own rather than government taking care of them all. We are great because of the people here and who have not been defeated by the government of the United States.

So I hope we in this House would turn against the temptation of turning everything over to government. This is one place where we can put the brakes on and say no to government running the health of this Nation. Because government doesn't do it better. You know, this government-run health care plan has the confidence of FEMA, the efficiency of the Post Office, and the

compassion of the IRS, and we should start over and fix the problems that we have rather than expecting government to take care of us all.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. TOWNS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

FIXING HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the Democratic health care bill fixes a number of long-standing problems with health insurance and health care in America. The health insurance industry is exempt from antitrust law in the United States. That means they can and they do get together and collude. They collude to drive up your premiums, they collude to curtail your coverage, they divide up the world and determine where each of them might or might not sell policies so there isn't competition in any way. That is all legal. They are exempt.

The Democratic bill with my amendment repeals that privilege for this industry. They will have to play under the same rules as every other business in America. That will lower premiums between 10 and 25 percent, according to the Consumer Union. That is one step. That is in the Democratic bill. The Republicans wouldn't touch that with a hundred-foot pole. The insurance industry is so generous at campaign time, they want to actually give new loopholes to the industry, which I will get to in a moment.

The Democratic bill outlaws denying you coverage because you were once sick, preexisting condition. The Democratic plan denies canceling your policy when you have been paying your premiums for years because you got sick. That is called rescission by the industry. No more. No lifetime caps which are hidden in the small print. People find out about them when they get a serious illness. Outlawed by the Democratic bill.

And, also, the Democratic bill will put annual caps on people's spending. No one will ever again lose their house in America because they lost their job and their health insurance and they got sick. Yes, the hospital still has to take them, but they will take your house. That won't happen if the Democratic bill is adopted. The Republicans will deal with none of those abuses, in their obeisance to the Republicans, their patrons in the insurance industry.

We are going to begin to fill in the doughnut hole which they created. We are going to help small businesses buy

plans with health credits. It is a good start. It is not perfect. It can be improved as we go through the process. But it is a good start at reining in the costs of an out-of-control health care system.

Now the Republicans' alternative, as I said, they continue the anti-trust exemption and the price fixing by the insurance industry. They allow them to continue to deny you coverage because you were once sick. They allow the insurance industry to do rescissions and cancel your policy when you got sick, even though you have been paying your premiums. And, of course, individual coverage will not be limited, so they will still have bankruptcies and people losing their houses.

But wait. It gets better. They have something called the new national plan. That is the key to what they are doing here. You can buy a national policy, and it will be cheaper. And, oh, wait a minute. Here is the small print, page 122 of the Republican bill: Your national policy will only be subject to the rules in the State in which it is written. Not where you live. If you have a problem, you will have to file with the insurance commissioner in the State where it is written. That is probably not too good because we have some States that basically don't regulate the industry at all.

But it gets better. The Republicans are so creative. They have created a 51st State called the Northern Mariana Islands because of the convicted Republican lobbyist Jack Abramoff and the scandals around him, the sweat shops, the sex scandals, all that stuff. That is where your new national plan will be based, is the Northern Mariana Islands.

So if you buy a policy in my home State of Oregon and you want to file a complaint, you will be calling the insurance commissioner in the Northern Mariana Islands. And perhaps, when he gets out of jail, that might even be Jack Abramoff. What a great deal. It would be a joke if they weren't serious about it. This is something that the industry wanted. They wanted a new loophole to better abuse consumers, and the Republicans want to deliver it to them. They can't be serious.

So I would say to my colleagues, you can throw in with the insurance industry which they seem to think is totally benign and always there for the American people. Or you can throw in on the side of consumer protection, lower costs, and health care for all Americans. That's the choice tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)